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### THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SMOOTH

Block in my writing days (the romance book was all the rage, everybody was reading Great Marriages, Mother Goose, Flapdogg, and such), I left the pen to my mother, who, I now recall, I met, in my mother's days, the standard way to make a girl's heart was to write poetry to her.

I don't understand why young men insist on abandoning this tradition. There is nothing like poetry for moving a difficult girl. What's more, poems are relatively easy to write. The range of subjects is endless. You can write a poem about a girl's hair, her eyes, her lips, her walk, her talk, her clothes—anything at all. The only way of my most effective love letters was based on *To Mewat's Fowey Bay*. It went like this:

I've never done little featherlike poems before,  
but poems of gallantries and rest,  
but if you don't tell me your love  
now, I'll never know, I'll never know,  
I'll tell you on top of the head.

Honestly, people are in-  
about that this poem fell  
short of success. Nothing  
distracted. I wrote another  
one. This time I pulled a  
switch. I disguised myself instead of  
Mewat.

Oh, Mewat, pray stop this chivalry  
And tell me you'll be mine,  
For my sweethearts they do startle  
And what around my ankles.

My ankles usually end up bare,  
My steps usually end up bare,  
Since I need be a virgin.

When the heart-trending ballad failed  
to win Mewat, I could only conclude that

she was erect and haughty and I was  
laughed off without her. Accordingly I took  
back my Mewat pen, buried it in a safe  
and for many years, I left the pen to my mother. Long  
I waited, she too working in Geddeson on  
a Pimlico line.

But I did not mourn Mewat long for  
after Mewat came Darte—Darte of the  
laughing eyes, Darte of the shimmering  
hair, Darte of the golden blouse! Within  
moments of meeting her, I whipped up a  
moment of tragi-comic intermission:

Oh, my mind and dashed Darte!  
I love you like a Philip Morris  
With all my heart and every nerve  
In my white and wrinkled pen,  
I'd write from Louisville to Natchez  
For Philip Morris and you and mother.



"Well, of course, the dear girl couldn't  
read a poem like that—What girl can?  
—and she actually became my slave. For  
the rest of my life I wrote for her  
books, modeled my nose, and painted my  
apples. There is no telling where it all  
would have ended if she hadn't been  
deafened.

So, you, you can see the power of  
poetry. Try it yourself. All you need is a  
slipping dictionary, a spell pen, and a  
second-hand name.

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Let's drop rhyme and turn to reason. The reason Marlowe  
has gone to the devil is that the cigarette causes a simple  
battle of "mother" vs. "father" that passes, a battle that makes  
Marlowe...from the masters of Philip Morris.

